



Community Development Programs

Watsonville Enterprise Community (EC)

The City of Watsonville, in Santa Cruz County on the Pacific Coast, is predominately an agriculture-based economy and, as a result, the unemployment rate fluctuates seasonally. The goal of the EC has been focused on providing job training to its upcoming job force, including job creation, and economic development. The City recognizes that the pace and character of new employment development depends on the skills and competitiveness of its young people and is committed to implementing and fostering collaborative efforts with local small businesses to provide a unique opportunity for participants to learn all aspects of small business ownership and gain hands-on experience.

An extensive employment training program, Career Works, is helping low-income families and youth achieve employment and self-sufficiency in the EC. The program is a partnership between the EC, the Santa Cruz County Human Resources Agency, and the David and Lucille Packard Foundation. Career Works trains participants for medical, dental, and office assistant positions, covering the full cost of training and subsidizing the first 200 hours of employment for participants. Businesses taking part in this program are eligible for State business tax incentives. The Packard Foundation has provided \$31,500 for supportive services for trainees, including childcare, transportation, books and work materials.

Included in the benefits the EC derived from its designation:

- Rural Business Enterprise Grant to provide job training and hands-on work experience to the County's upcoming work force to learn all aspects of small business ownership.
- Recognition from the U.S. Department of Justice for the EC's efforts after receiving a Problem-Solving Partnership Grant. The Police Department has experienced multiple successes in its partnership with the community and has made significant progress in lowering crime rates.

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